439 they need it and this is the most necessary item they have, for they cut and hew perpetually. You can get their goods cheaply and some of the French have made a fine profit out of it. A tortoise, even the biggest, is worth a billhook or an axe. A big choice pig is not worth more. But the profit is greatest when dealing with cotton hammocks and caret turtle shell. As our French are shrewder than the Caribs, they easily deceive them. The traders never bargain for a hammock in the evening since these good people will then have it present in their minds that they have an approaching need for it, and they would not give up their beds at any price. But in the morning they give them up cheaply without a thought that when night comes they will need them as much as before. At the end of the day they always return in order to exchange their purchase, simply saying that they cannot sleep on the ground. When they see that the traders do not intend to return them, the Caribs almost weep in vexation. They themselves are very subject to retract in all the bargains they make, and this is the reason why it is necessary to remove and hide everything which has been bought from them. In a word, all their commerce and trade is a childish game, and often when they come among us they cost more to feed than the profits that one has made out of the goods bought from them. They are very tiresome in asking for what they desire. However, whether it is because of shame or pride, they never request an article which has been once denied them.

6. Feasts

276 The Caribs hold certain assemblies which they call ouicou, after
● 786 the name of the drink. Since contact with the French they are called vins. These assemblies are rejoicings held in common and during the course of them men, women, and children get as drunk as pigs. Ouicou is drunk in excess without eating anything. In these debauches they remember past insults and get angry; anger turns to fury, and fury breaks out into horrible vengeance. There are many different reasons for holding an assembly. They hold assemblies when war is planned, when men slash themselves all over with agouti teeth after their wives give birth, when their children have their hair cut for the

276 first time, and when fathers make their sons warriors or when they
786 include them among those capable of going to war. They also hold drinking parties when they want to put a canoe to sea after it is newly built in the mountains. They call in all their neighbors who work for several hours and drink for the rest of the day. They also call in help to clear a new garden or when they make a new house. All their
[534] vins, ouicou, or debauches are accompanied by ribaldry. Some play the flute, others sing, and they make a kind of music which according to their tastes is sweet. The old women who never sing unless
[533] they are drunk, sing the bass notes with hoarse voices. The young people sing the higher notes with a piercing noise. There is a girl who holds a calabash full of small stones. She shakes it in accom-
276 paniment to the music of the others.
786 During the time that these living violins are humming, three or
535 four of the most clever among them have themselves rubbed all over their body with a resinous, sticky water. They cover themselves with
[493] feathers and masquerade among the entire assembly taking a thousand postures and dancing in such a barbarous way that it is annoying rather than entertaining. One man holds his right arm extended over the shoulders of another. He in return, has his left arm around the neck of his companion. All the others follow them in pairs in the same way, dancing around the carbet. The whole assembly laughs in amusement at this buffoonery. It continues until the women bring
276 each of the dancers a calabash of ouicou, which is as much as two
786 quarts as measured in Paris. No matter how drunk they are it is necessary to empty the calabash even if it kills them. If someone can no longer drink he is seized by one of the strongest among the company who embraces him from behind. The strong Carib so forcibly squeezes the other man's belly by this embrace that he is emptied of his excess through both mouth and bottom. Thus he is compelled to finish the calabash. Afterwards he starts to dance again.

Strange as it may seem, the master of the carbet who has invited everyone does not participate in the debauchery. It seems that he should never mingle with the group. He stands upright in front of the door resting his club on his shoulder as if he were a sentry, to prevent any brawl that might break out.

[489] The Caribs do not believe that drunkeness is a crime, but consider it only a diversion. One sees the women drinking to excess just like

276 the men. However it is considered by them to be a terrible crime to
786 take advantage sexually of a woman who is drunk. The women also
[84] dance in a circle, each holding one hand on her head and the other on her buttocks, and neither jumping nor walking, they shake their feet. Although they exert themselves strenuously they actually traverse very little ground.

574 They have only one kind of feast which is respectable and decent. When a Carib has captured a tortoise or has made some other good catch, he invites one of his closest neighbors and gives him a good party. After eating well, the neighbor returns home very contented.

Despite the disorders of their debauches, they have at least the decency of never eating until they have invited all those who are in their company to do so. After sharing the meat it sometimes happens that there is nothing left for the man who gives the party. Because this [sharing] is their custom they often became angry at Father Raymond [Breton] who refused his share for fear he would be too much of a burden.

These assemblies are very frequent, and in Dominica there is one almost every week.

7. Food and Treatment of Visitors

264 There is nothing cruder among the Caribs than their eating habits; they are so dirty in everything connected with eating and drinking that it turns the stomach of everyone who sees them prepare it. I don't mention their ouicou and ordinary drink which is made by the gossiping old women chewing cassava, and whose mouths often stink like latrines. While eating they are not ashamed to belch, piss, and I dare not say more. They are not at all surprised to see in their food hair, straw, leaves, caterpillars, and all kinds of other filth. They have nothing good and clean except bread, which is cassava. They add pimento so strongly to everything they eat that they are the only people who can eat it.

262 As concerns the meats usually eaten, they do not correspond to the ones we are accustomed to in Europe. They only eat bourgaux [bugaus] which is a shellfish, crabs, tortoises, and several kinds of